



a bachelor of architecture thesis by **BILLY VAN ELK**

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SYMBIOSIS: DESIGN FOR A PERCEIVED NEED

Special thanks must first and foremost be given to my loving and supporting parents who have supplied me with many encouraging phone calls, endless food, and the financial backing to endure the past five years of my undergraduate education.

Secondly I must thank Brian Hollars who has inspired me to pursue architectural solutions that are both practical and realistic. From the moment I met Brian four years ago he has consistently pushed me to pursue my passions whether or not they relate to architecture.

I would also like to thank Adam Weber who has encouraged me throughout this thesis year with his words, his suggestions, and his music.

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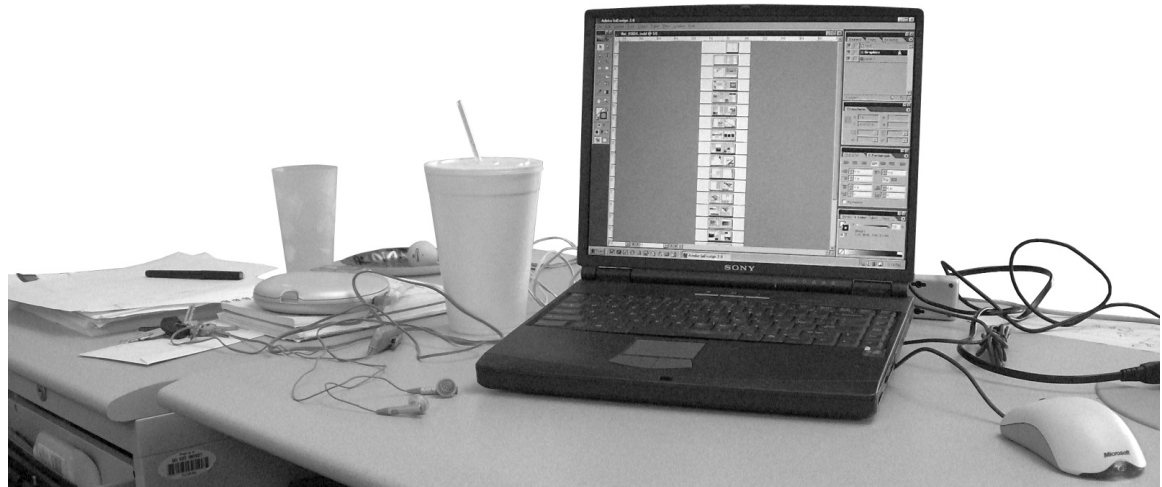
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SYMBIOSIS

design for a perceived need

an architectural thesis by
Billy Van Elk



ABSTRACT

This facility aims to fill a void here in Muncie, IN. In most college towns music venues that attract local and national talent are abundant, but in Muncie there exists no such building. This has not always been the case. Over the decades Muncie has seen music venues open with bright futures only to watch them crumble under financial strain.

During the time when college students are gone for the summer is when most of the financial strain is put on a venue that exists to serve the college age demographic. This building creates a symbiotic relationship between three different spaces in order to attract a solid consumer base both across generations and throughout the year. A startup business of any kind is hard to maintain as a solitary unit so this building is designed to create interdependence between the three main spaces.

Another issue that is explored through the process of designing this building is how to create a new sense of symbiosis between preexisting buildings. To accomplish this goal a once thriving and already developed area of Muncie is chosen for redevelopment. This type of development makes use of the concept of urban infill and creates a unique building that addresses both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The focus of the facility is to create interconnections between the interior spaces while also enhancing the site upon which it is placed. Ultimately this complex creates a final product to fill a void both in the built and cultural environments of Muncie, IN.



looking across the parking lot
southwest corner



DIRECTION

The cover of the winter 2004 expo magazine reads “Yes, Muncie has a music scene... problem is, there’s no good place for bands to play.” This statement, coupled with my personal experience of travelling long distances for concerts over the past four years, initially pushed my thesis towards creating a small college themed concert venue. As time passed my thesis morphed from simply creating a building to a thesis aimed not only at addressing issues in the built form but also at creating an object that enhanced and changed the site it was placed in. The design began to be informed and shaped by the contextual elements much more than my first attempts had been and the direction of my thesis exploration changed course frequently throughout the year as I explored these issues. While I began my thesis year searching for a way to design a universal building which could exist comfortably in any college environment it has instead evolved into a solution which draws most of its conclusions directly from the site upon which it is built.



SITE SELECTION

Based on my personal interests in creating a building to provide for a need in the college town area of Muncie a site was selected that fulfilled three qualifications. First of all the site had to be located within walking distance of Ball State University. Secondly the site needed to be located in a high traffic area where it would attract customers all year long. Finally the site needed to be a space in need of redevelopment.

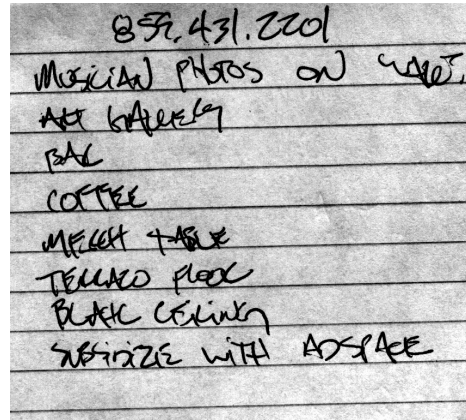
The site that was eventually chosen is a shopping area on McGalliard known as Northwest Plaza. Presently on the site there exists a variety of different businesses which attract a fluctuating and varied consumer base throughout the day. The buildings of note are a 24hr grocery store, a public library, four restaurants, a large craft store, an office supply store, and a movie theatre.

The specific location of the building within the site allows the design to reclaim unused space in the parking lot as well as replace a now vacant building. It also serves to unify the entire site and create a new sense of symbiosis between the key elements already in existence.



■ buildings of importance

site selection: aerial photograph



RESEARCH AND PRECEDENT STUDIES

Researching the idea of a small concert venue led me on a whirlwind tour of popular concert venues across the Midwest. Among the destinations were The Rave in Milwaukee, The Patio and Vecino's in Indianapolis, Headliner's Music Hall in Louisville, The Southgate House in Cincinnati, Cafe Camereta's in Anderson, IN and The Living Room in Muncie, IN. Exploring these venues not only informed me about the common drawbacks found in music venues but also revealed to me how certain music venues were designed as mixed use facilities incorporating art galleries, coffee bars, and billiard rooms.

[observation one: southgate house]

[concert: yo la tengo featuring fred armiesan]

The Historic Southgate House is located at 24 East 3rd St. Newport, Kentucky, directly across the river from downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. Richard Southgate built the Southgate House in 1814 as a family dwelling. Prisoners of the War of 1812 built the large house and, when it was originally constructed, the Southgate House occupied a full city block. Completion of the Southgate House deemed it the second largest dwelling in the area. Today the house has been renovated as a small mixed-use entertainment and art facility. A small bar that serves alcohol and other drinks into one room and coffee and non-alcoholic beverages into another occupy the main floor to the left of the main entrance. On the right

hand side of the main hallway, which contains the stairs, is a smaller room with two billiard tables. The back half of the house is where the concert venue is located and the balcony overlooking the open floor and stage area is accessed directly from the main level. The basement level houses the floor for the bulk of those attending a show in the ballroom which has a maximum occupancy of 600 people. Offices and operations are contained on the second floor of the building as well as in a small area of the first floor [selling tickets and some merchandise] and the third floor is home to an art gallery featuring a rotating display of local artists.

The Southgate House functions well as a concert venue and as a place where people of all ages can simply enjoy spending an evening regardless of whether or not they have come to watch the show. The success of the Southgate House is aided by the surrounding urban landscape. Within walking distance of the venue is a large movie theatre, several types of restaurants, a shopping mall, hotels, and a large bookstore.

notes:

- adorn venue walls with photos of events
- art gallery combines local artists with nationwide performing artists
- placement of the sound table/board is key
- subsidize costs through advertisements
- ceiling must be black

[observation two: the patio]

[concerts: death cab for cutie; scotland yard gospel choir, wheat]

The Patio Nightclub, located at 6308 N. Guilford Ave in the Broad Ripple village [just out of downtown Indianapolis], focuses on grouping nationally touring artists with local and regional bands that are just beginning to get into the industry. Their consistently low ticket prices, typically under \$15, allows them to fill the venue on a consistent basis while bringing in bands that might only be known to a few of the concert goers. Surrounded by nightclubs, bars, coffeehouses, restaurants, small grocers, and independent music outlets helps The Patio with continually expanding their customer base.

notes:

- floor coverings and materials are crucial
- moveable furniture creates a dynamic space



[observation three: vecino's coffee gallery]

Vecino's Coffee Gallery, located in the first floor of South Riley Tower, downtown Indianapolis, proves that a very small space can still provide a variety of intimate and diverse opportunities for interactions to occur. The store is a small and basic rectangle and, with a limited amount of space, efficiency is a key element in the design. Two different types of seating are arranged. Typical café tables and chairs compromise most of the seating space while a smaller, more intimate space, accented with an art gallery, is set up with couches and comfortable padded chairs immediately adjacent to the service counter. The spaces also are also distinguishable from each other by the use of varying ceiling heights and materials. Overall the space maintains the efficiency necessary of a coffeehouse without sacrificing the intimacy of interactions that take place between customers and between customers and employees.

notes:

- efficiency of space is crucial
- intimacy of space is defined by more than a simple spacial layout
- fine arts seem to be synonymous with coffee
- offer options for seating and interaction level
- lighting creates atmosphere
- aroma is a large part of the advertisement

[observation four: café camereta]
[concert: josh garrels]

Café Camereta's is located in downtown Anderson, Indiana within walking distance of a small outdoor performance stage and the historic Paramount Theatre. Café Camereta is a small retrofit of an existing brick and limestone two story building. The first floor contains coffee preparation and service areas as well as three distinct and separate seating areas. One area is comprised of bar style seating close to the service counter, another is fashioned like a living room with a fireplace and wood panel flooring, and the main seating area is filled with circular tables with custom wooden chairs. This main seating area is sandwiched between a performing stage and the sound booth. Incorporating professional recording technology into the design and layout of the coffeehouse allows musicians to record a live show and remix and remaster the recording before selling it. This aspect of the coffee shop makes it particularly appealing to young and independent artists of central Indiana and the concert series arranged by Café Camereta's has been successful in both discovering up and coming talent and filling their coffeehouse with customers. The second floor of Camereta's contains small rooms and offices that are used during the Sunday morning church services which are held in the coffeehouse.

notes:

- distinctly separate seating areas
- efficiency of circulation space is a key design element
- color choice of materials is extremely important
- technology allows for an inexpensive album recording
- mid-height walls and bar seating creates a visual barrier
- double height ceiling over main seating area
- use a black ceiling



[observation five: headliners music hall]
[concert: the polyphonic spree]

Headliners Music Hall is located at 1386 Lexington Road in Louisville, Kentucky. They feature a blend of national acts and local talent. The venue, when filled, can house 400 people in an atmosphere akin to a living room. Sofa seating and an overlooking second floor balcony, combined with extremely low lighting, creates an intimate space. One intrusion into the space is the garishly modern bar located at the entrance to the venue, opposite the space from the stage. Blue neon lights accent the bar and the beverage consumption area and provide a garish contrast to the otherwise subdued interior. The venue is located literally in the middle of nowhere. To the east is a mostly vacant brick warehouse building that is slowly being converted into a small office complex. Directly across the street is a factory complete with blackened windows and a fenced in parking lot. The site the music hall sits upon backs directly into an extremely steep wooded slope that juts up over fifty feet. On this slope sits the only identifiable landmark close to the building in the form of a mock up of small plane crash.

notes:

- location is everything
- looking for a venue does not increase the value of the performance
- provide varying levels of seating
- the performance is more important than the surrounding spaces
- use a black ceiling

[observation six: the rave]
[concert: death cab and ben kweller]

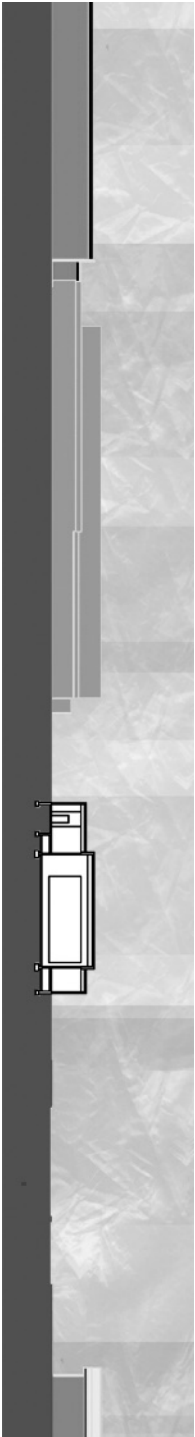
The Rave at The Eagles Club is a 1500-person, all ages concert hall located at 2401 W. Wisconsin Avenue Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Rave is part of a larger entertainment complex including a small bar/venue, a 25,000 square foot ballroom, and 800-person club like venue, and a brand new 400-person maximum occupancy vibe room. The Eagles Ballroom is one of the busiest venues in America and The Rave is focused on pairing newer talent with bigger national acts. A balcony winds around the stage to provide reserved seating for select shows and compliments an expansive general admission area on the main floor. The complex takes up an entire city block and is immediately surrounded by various parking lots. Next to The Rave on Wisconsin Avenue there are many fast food restaurants, small restaurants, and hotels. Each part of the venue has a unique entrance from the main lobby and they all retain individualized and separate flavors.

notes:

- mixed use facilities promote varied age groups amongst consumers
- parking is very important
- dark colors are a necessity for a concert venue
- high ceiling over main area, low ceiling over support areas
- beverages are required
- use a black ceiling



north south site section



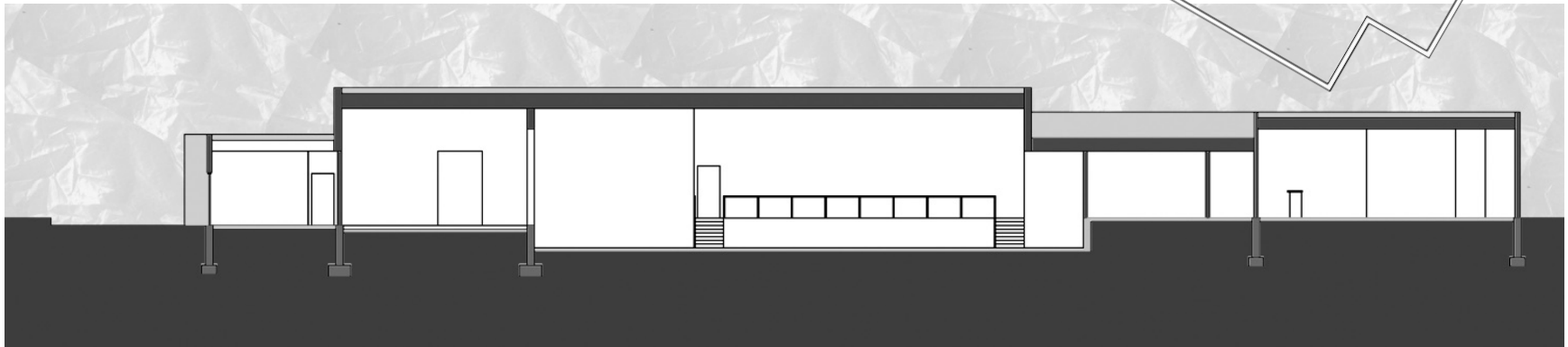
CONCEPT ONE

This concept was formed as a universal solution. The entire building is focused inward with the music venue serving as the heart of the entire miniature complex. The two other spaces were thought of as fingers that wrapped around this central space not only to protect it but also to provide auxiliary seating and support areas. In addition to this spatial arrangement the heart of the building focused all mechanical and electrical systems in space shared by all three segments of the building.

This concept fails largely because it aims to create a universal building worthy of being placed in any parking lot in America. When it is placed on this specific site it lacks an architectural language consistent with the context and also serves to compound the problems already existing with the site.



east west building section





SITE ANALYSIS: REMIX

Due to the failure of the first concept to succeed when placed within the site it was deemed a necessary step in the design process to revisit the site. At this time the site was analyzed and dissected so that all the information gathered could be used to inform the final thesis design.

During this study it was discovered the entire shopping area was failing. Three main disconnects were identified and analyzed and these three issues began to serve as design directives.



[disconnect 1]

All of the buildings in this strip development are set far back off of the road. This creates a physical and visual abyss between McGalliard and the front entrances of all the retail spaces. It also creates an unattractive sea of asphalt which goes largely unused through most of the year.



[disconnect 2]

Every building is made up of monolithic planes. Instead of the buildings being designed to create a rich contextual language, each building is essentially a standard box with a large sign attached to the front entrance.



[disconnect 3]

The entire site lacks design elements on the pedestrian scale. Although many people walk from north to south across the site there are no pedestrian crossing areas on McGalliard. Additionally, the parking area of the site has no clear guides for vehicular traffic. This lack of organization creates hazards for pedestrians as cars are continually cutting across the parking lot at random angles.

[cultural site context]

The cultural context of the site is one of a burgeoning college town. On one end of the spectrum there lives the Delaware county native who has always called Muncie their home. On the other end there exists a mass of approximately 20,000 students and family members who move in and out of the area on an annual basis. During the summer months the city of Muncie is left largely fallow as the college age demographic travels elsewhere for summer work or education experiences. During the academic year the city is filled with college students and local residents alike.

One issue that exists within this cultural context is the lack of overlap between designated college student areas and local resident areas. Recently downtown Muncie has begun renovating and updating buildings and this has begun to draw students and residents alike into a common setting. My proposed site is already teeming with activities that promote such cross cultural interaction; restaurants, a movie theatre, the public library, and a 24 hour grocery store. The site is located at a place where a unique and innovative building type can become a focal point for the entire urban square, uniting the local residents and high school students with the college students.

Another aspect of the cultural context is the fact that no small concert venue exists within sixty miles of Muncie. Creating a small concert venue on a site in Muncie will fill this cultural void.



[physical site context]

The site is located on the south side of W McGalliard Road, between the cross streets of N Oakwood Ave and N Wheeling Ave. The address for the site is 1705 West McGalliard Road Muncie, IN 47304, and it is the previous location of the now nationally bankrupt Chi-Chi's restaurant. As it exists now, the site contains the old Chi-Chi's restaurant building set close to the road and is surrounded by a parking lot and various retail and entertainment facilities.

To the south of the building site there exists two long strip malls, oriented on an east to west axis. These shopping centers contain major attractions such as Hobby Lobby, Chuck E. Cheese's, Big Lot's, and Office Depot as well as minor stores including DEB and the Dollar Store. All of these stores share a common parking area located immediately to the south of McGalliard and it is at the center of this lot, bordering McGalliard, where the building is to be located.

On the western edge of this large parking area is another small strip building. This smaller complex contains Northwest Cinemas, a movie theatre owned and operated by



Kerasotes Cinemas, and a Baskin Robbins ice cream parlor.

The eastern part of the parking area is open to N Wheeling Ave. This portion of the parking lot, to the east of the proposed building site, contains two autonomous restaurants, Bob Evan's and Applebee's. There is also a standalone drive through ATM located in this portion of the parking area.

To the immediate north of the site, across



McGalliard, is the Kennedy Branch of the Muncie Public Library System which attracts over 1000 visitors every day. To the east of this is another shopping complex containing Papa Murphy's Pizza and a 24 hr. Marsh Supermarket. Also located in this area are a Boston Market and a Cingular Wireless Store.

All of these retailers and service providers come together to create a unique gathering space that offers different types of activities, ranging from entertainment to technology to restaurants, at all different times of the day. Certain spaces within the shopping

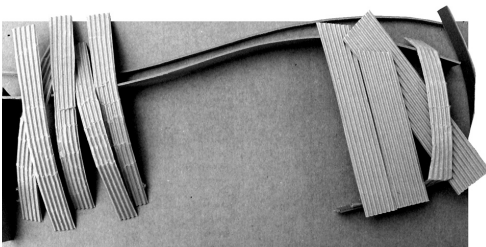
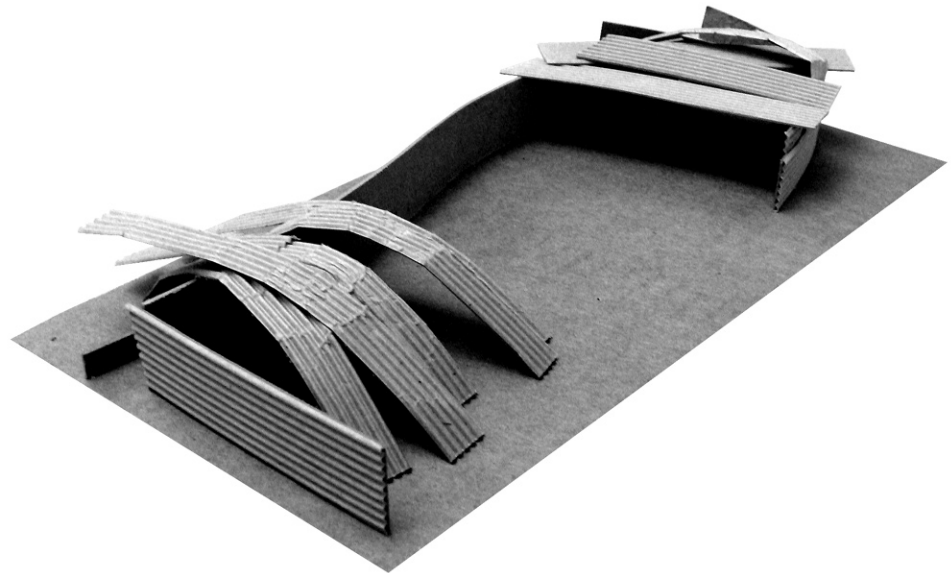
center are heavily trafficked at different times throughout the day and the proposed building site is located at a point where a central hub for this activity can be created.

Currently, on the specific site, a building exists that was built, owned, and operated by Prandium, Inc., owners of the Chi-Chi's restaurant brand. In mid-September of 2004 they sold the rights to the national chain of Mexican style restaurants to Outback Steakhouse due to a large outbreak of Hepatitis A that had occurred at one of the restaurants in Pennsylvania, subsequently causing the patronage of Chi-Chi's nationwide to drop an average of 40 percent. This building now stands vacant and unused and will be removed from the site to make way for the new design.

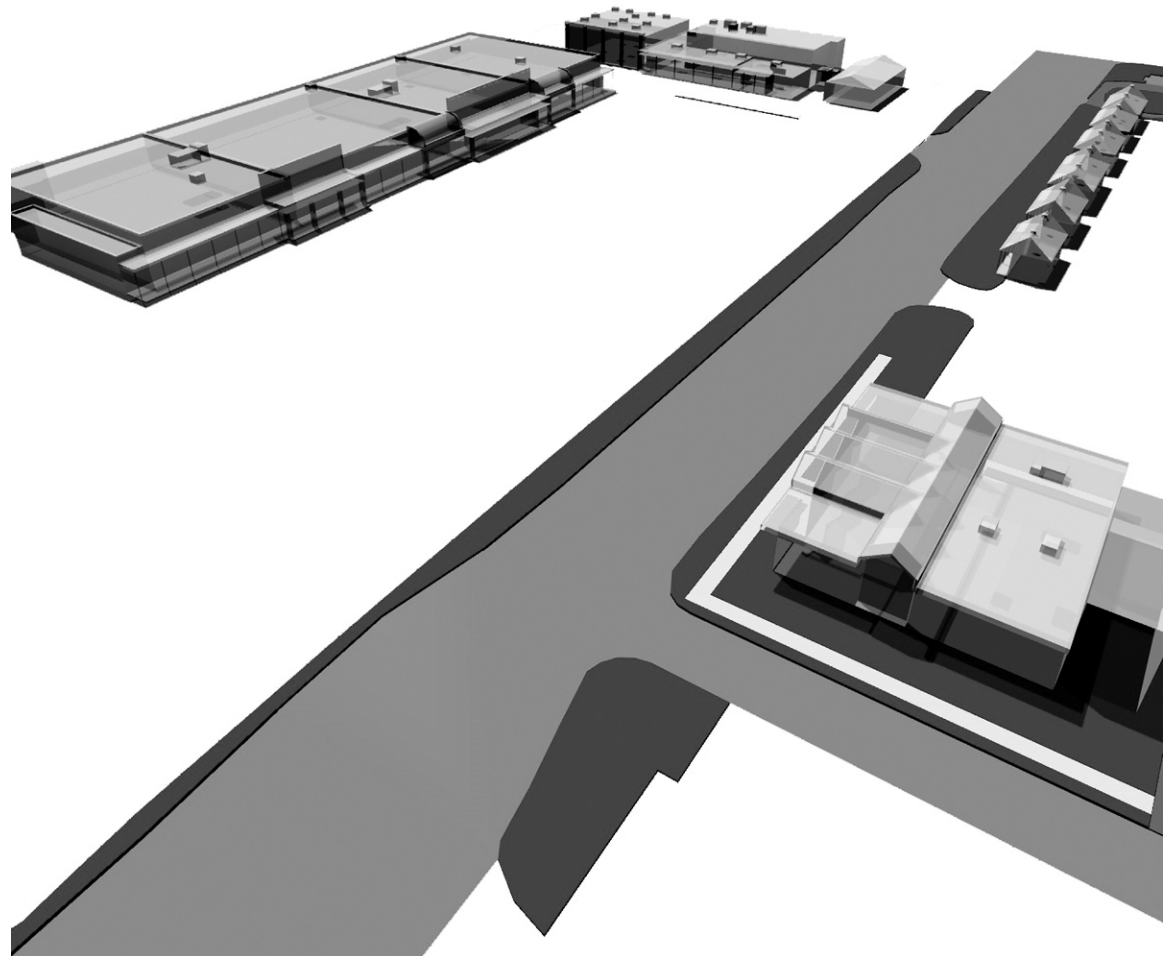
CONCEPT TWO

This concept began to be drawn from the site as opposed to being a building which would simply look cool no matter where it was placed. As such, this concept focuses on a linear pathway that ties together circulation, mechanical and electrical systems, and technology. This spine would serve as a shared zone between the three spaces.

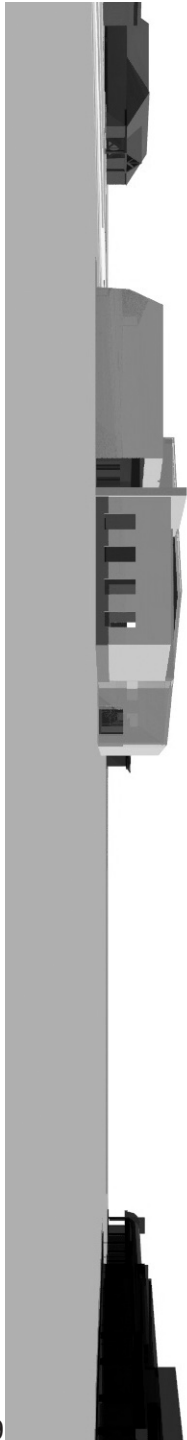
The linear arrangement of the parts is drawn directly from the linear nature of the site. Using any other ordering system seemed to create an object in constant conflict with the site. While the previous concept was awkward at best this concept begins to embrace and work with the site.



preliminary site axon: northeast corner



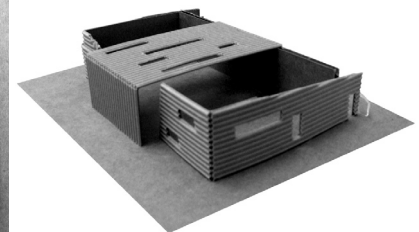
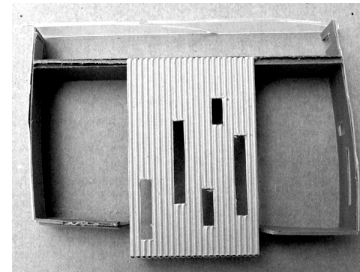
west site elevation

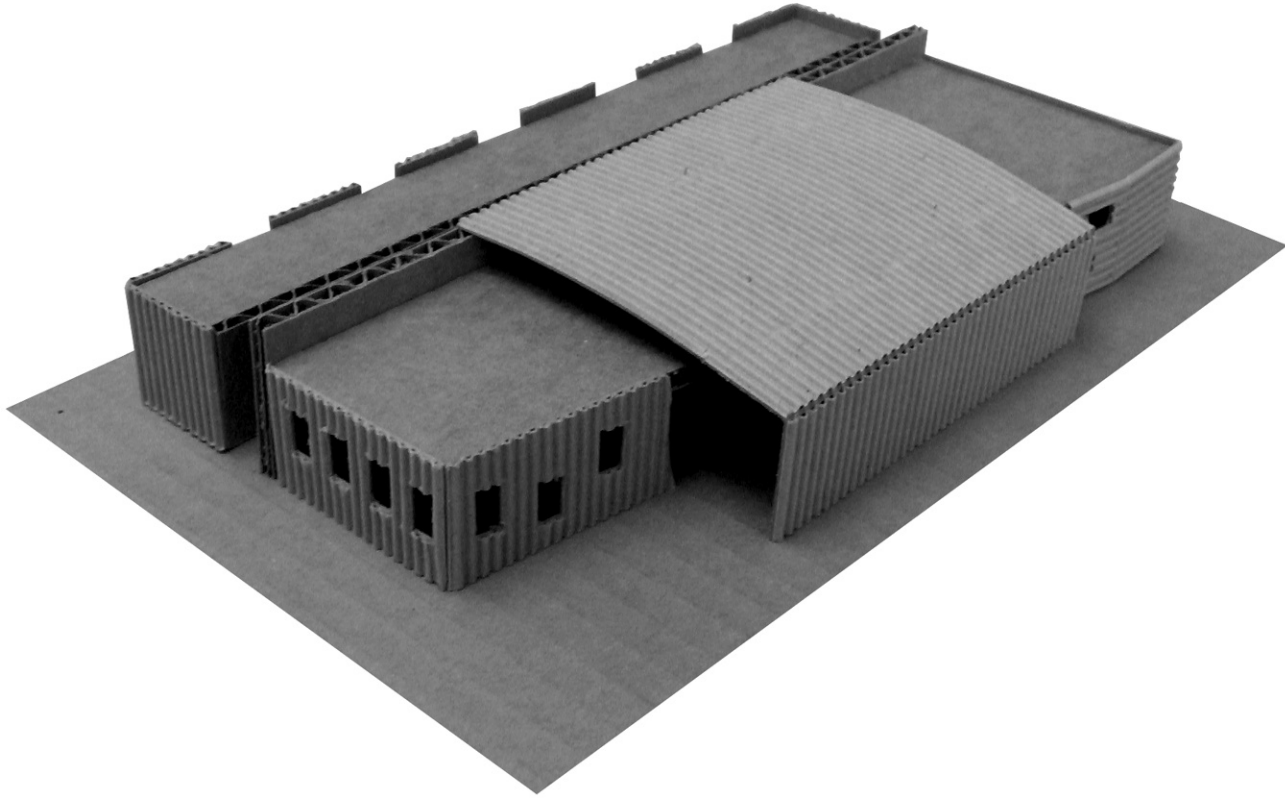


CONCEPT THREE

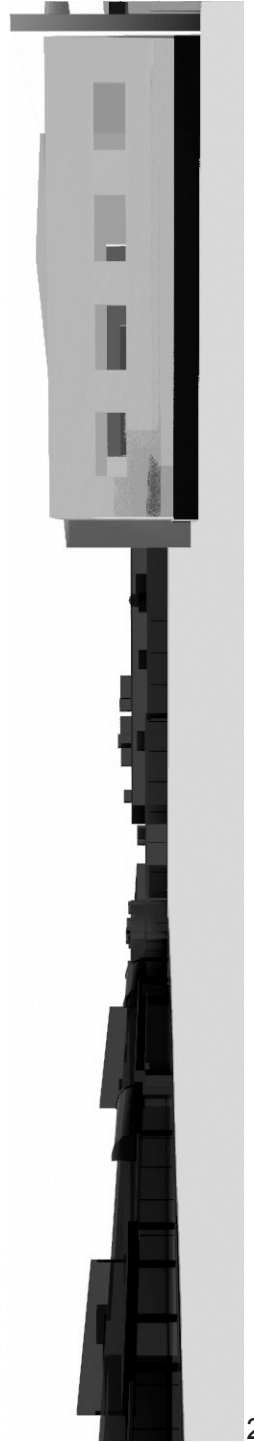
In this concept the idea of a building begins to take shape. Oriented along the north of the building would be all of the service facilities for the three interior spaces, again connected by a circulation spine. It is here that the idea of a large internal dividing wall first comes into the overall scheme to both serve as a physical separation between front and back as well as to be a visual cue for the casual observer as to the internal structure of the building.

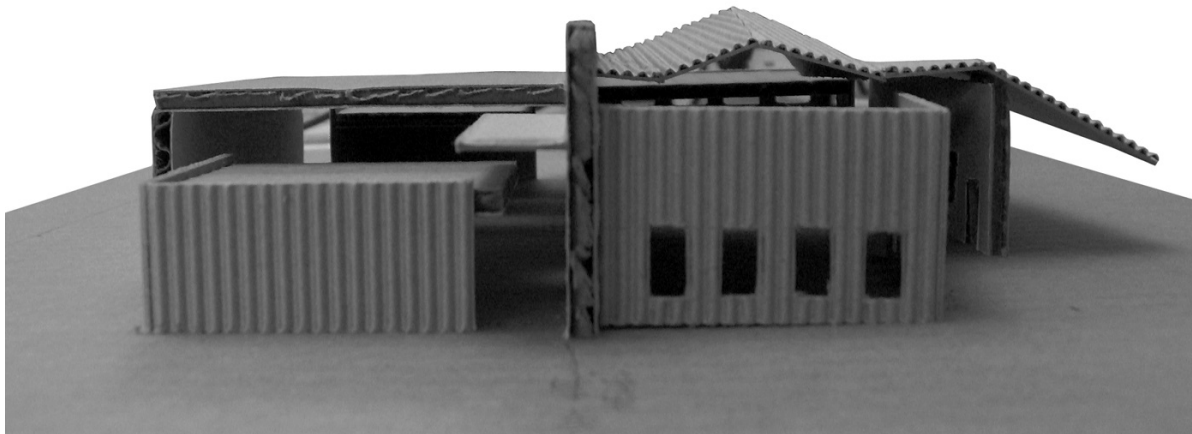
Ultimately this idea was great in concept but did not connect with the realities of square footages and internal connections. It also did not address the location of the stage or adequately push the design to be more than another strip development in this parking lot. One thing this concept does begin to do is relate more to the built environment that it is placed in, drawing its organization and visual aesthetic from the existing context.





east site elevation



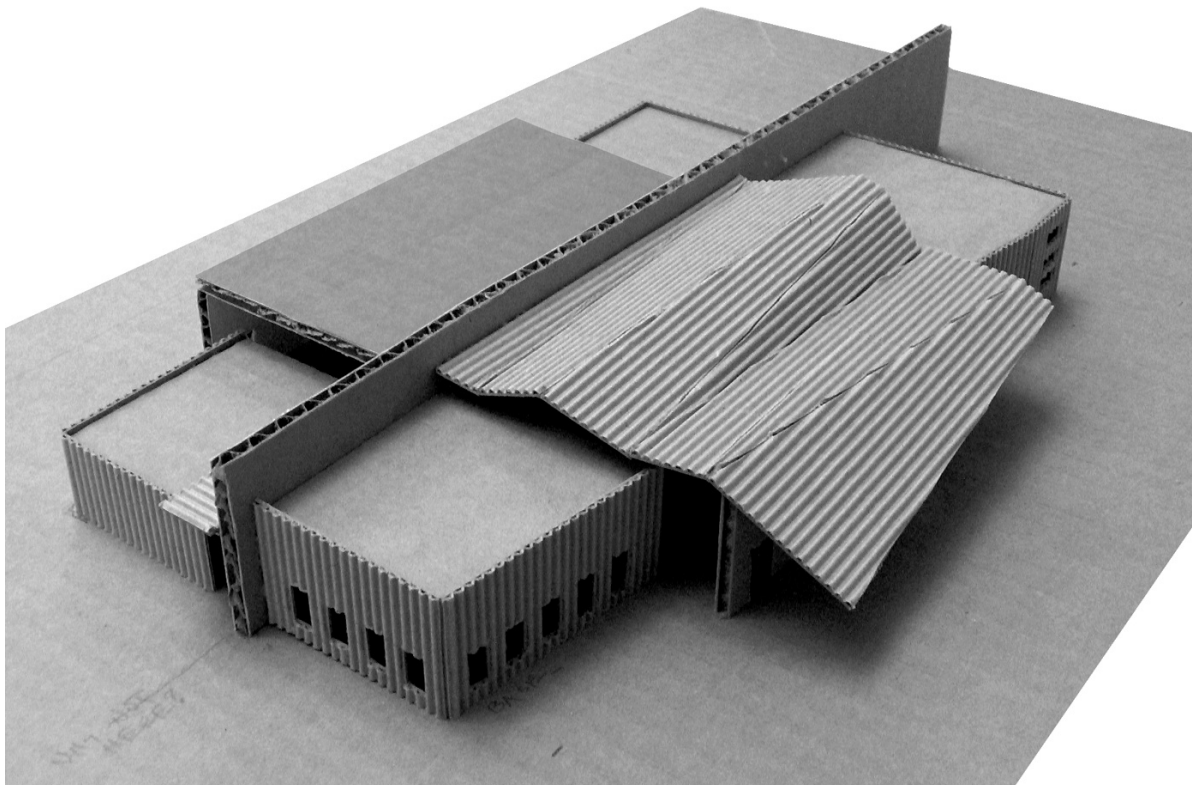


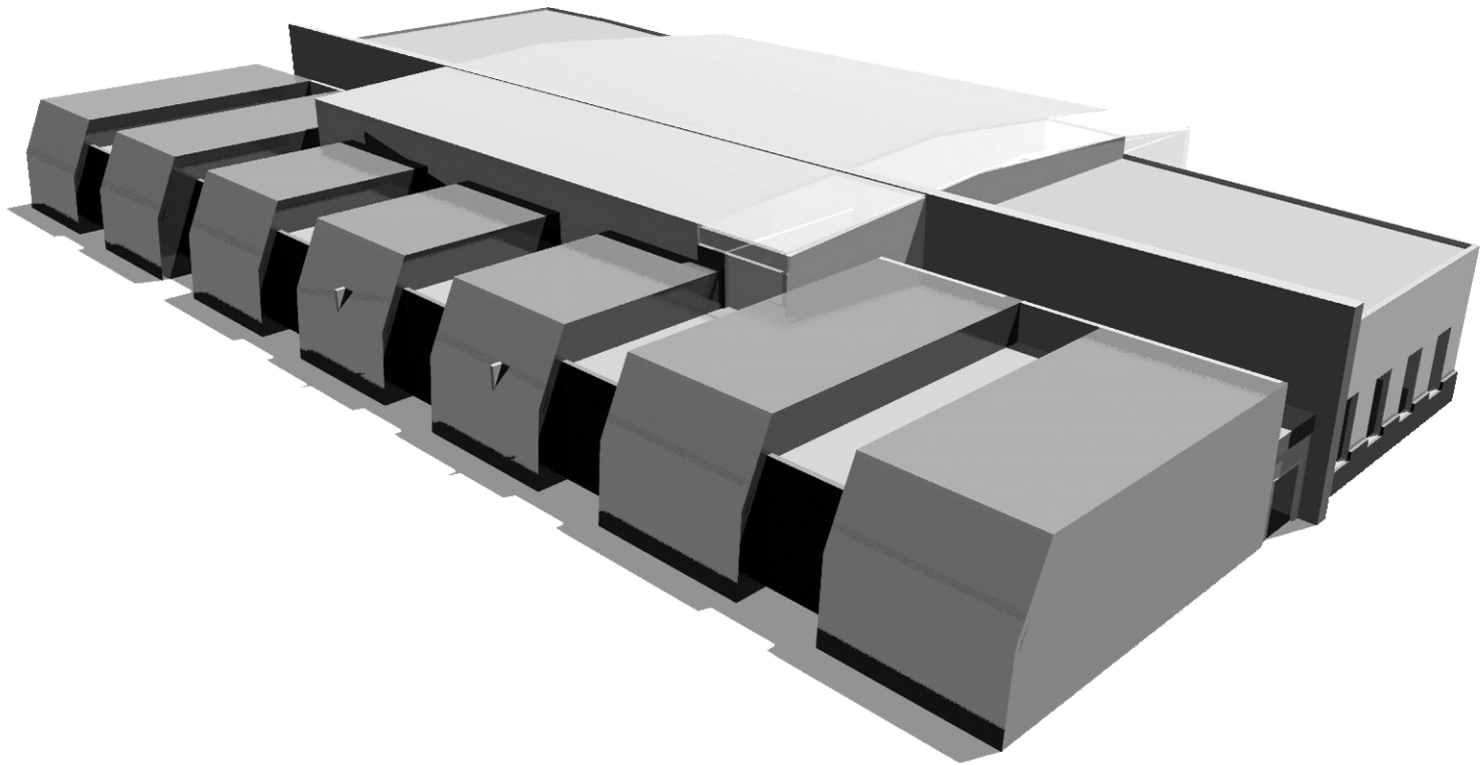
FINAL CONCEPT

In this stage of the design process the thesis is becoming more of a realistic building instead of a theoretical idea. This concept incorporates all of the previous explorations and attempts to create a whole piece that is greater than the sum of its parts. The large interior separation wall has begun to serve a vital function both organizationally as well as visually. The three main spaces within the building have thus been subdivided into six parts which achieve symmetry and serve to balance the building visually. Using the internal program of the building to dictate the external form yields a built environment that informs pedestrian and vehicular traffic as to how the building functions.

Here the dividing wall has also spread away from the building and has begun to create external spaces on the site. Doing this also allows the wall to define a vital north south pedestrian pathway as well as create a sheltered area on the south side of the building, away from McGalliard. This in turn creates an inward looking atmosphere within the shopping area between the existing buildings and the proposed venue.

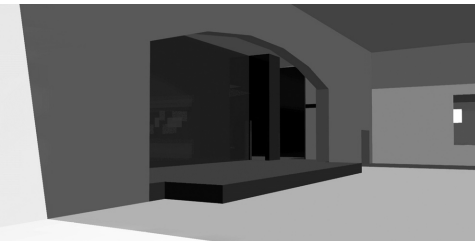
The biggest drawback to this concept was that everything about the design is timid. It contains many good ideas and the theory behind the design decisions is strong yet the execution of this concept lacks a sense of conviction that this is the correct design for the site. To fully complete these ideas the building would have to be designed with confidence and begin to make changes to the entire site.



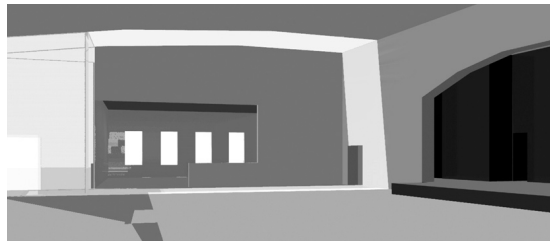


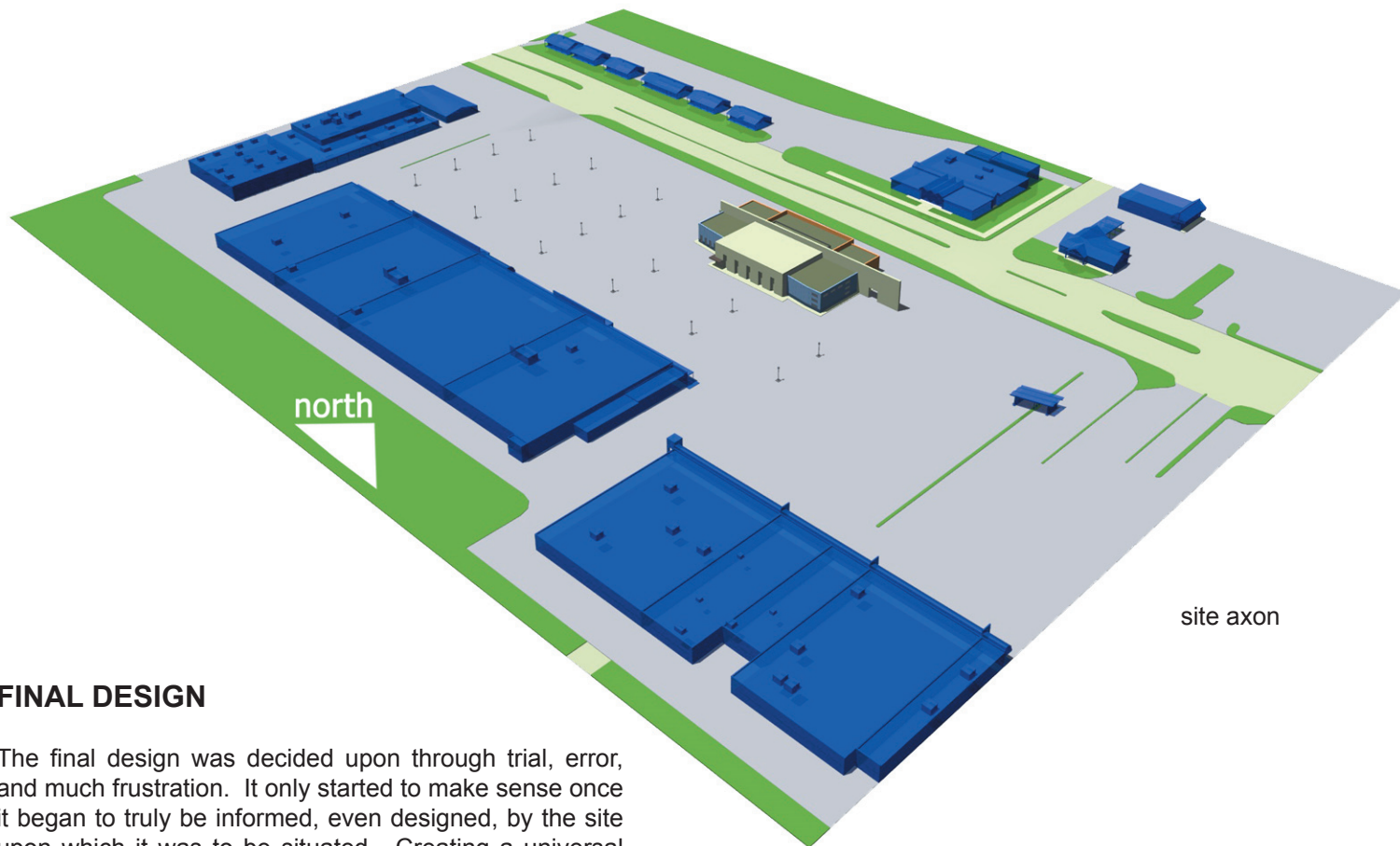
building axon: northwest corner

venue interior



venue interior





FINAL DESIGN

The final design was decided upon through trial, error, and much frustration. It only started to make sense once it began to truly be informed, even designed, by the site upon which it was to be situated. Creating a universal building that could be placed in any location would have proven to be the undoing of this thesis, which, in the end, focused much more on the means in which a building and site interact.

In one instant the building is derived entirely from the preexisting site and yet another, completely symbiotic relationship exists in which the completed building, in turn, begins to change the site upon which it is placed.

PROGRAM OF SPACES

[assigned spaces]

cafe		
	seating	2250 sq. ft.
	service and storage	1400 sq. ft.
venue		
	seating	5800 sq. ft.
	stage and support	2400 sq. ft.
	offices and dressing rooms	1200 sq. ft.
retail		
	display space	2800 sq. ft.
	offices and storage	1200 sq. ft.
shared		
	entry vestibule	200 sq. ft.
	bathrooms	750 sq. ft.
sub total		18000 sq. ft.

[additional spaces]

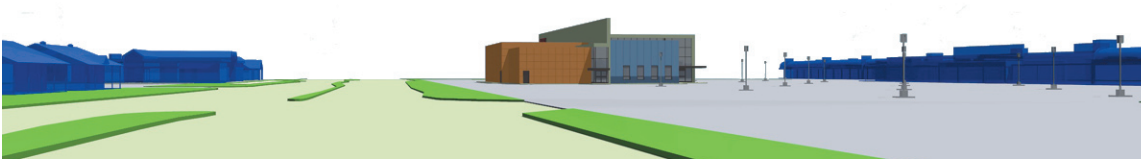
circulation	1800 sq. ft.
HVAC	2160 sq. ft.
structure	540 sq. ft.

[overall square footage]

total	22500 sq. ft.
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[addressing disconnect 1]

The building is placed on the site in a way that it brings the built edge of the site back to the road. This not only creates a new visual aesthetic within the confines of the immediate site but it also addresses the larger context of McGalliard. To the east and west of the site buildings are situated close to the road with a typical rhythm to their spacing. Placing this building close to the road picks up on this rhythm and allows the building to address the street.



looking east down McGalliard

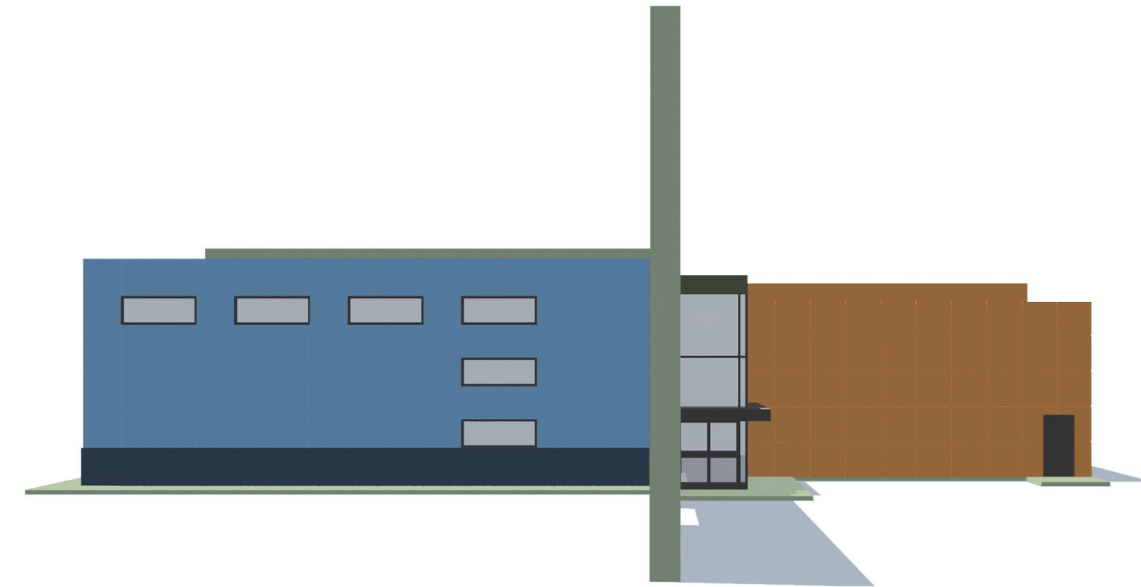


looking west down McGalliard

[addressing disconnect 2]

The surrounding context of the site is filled with look-alike boxes that have large, monolithic surfaces which serve to announce the front entrance. To combat this image, while still addressing the context within which this design stands, the monolithic surface became the central organizing principle of the design. It separates the consumer oriented side of the facility from the service side.

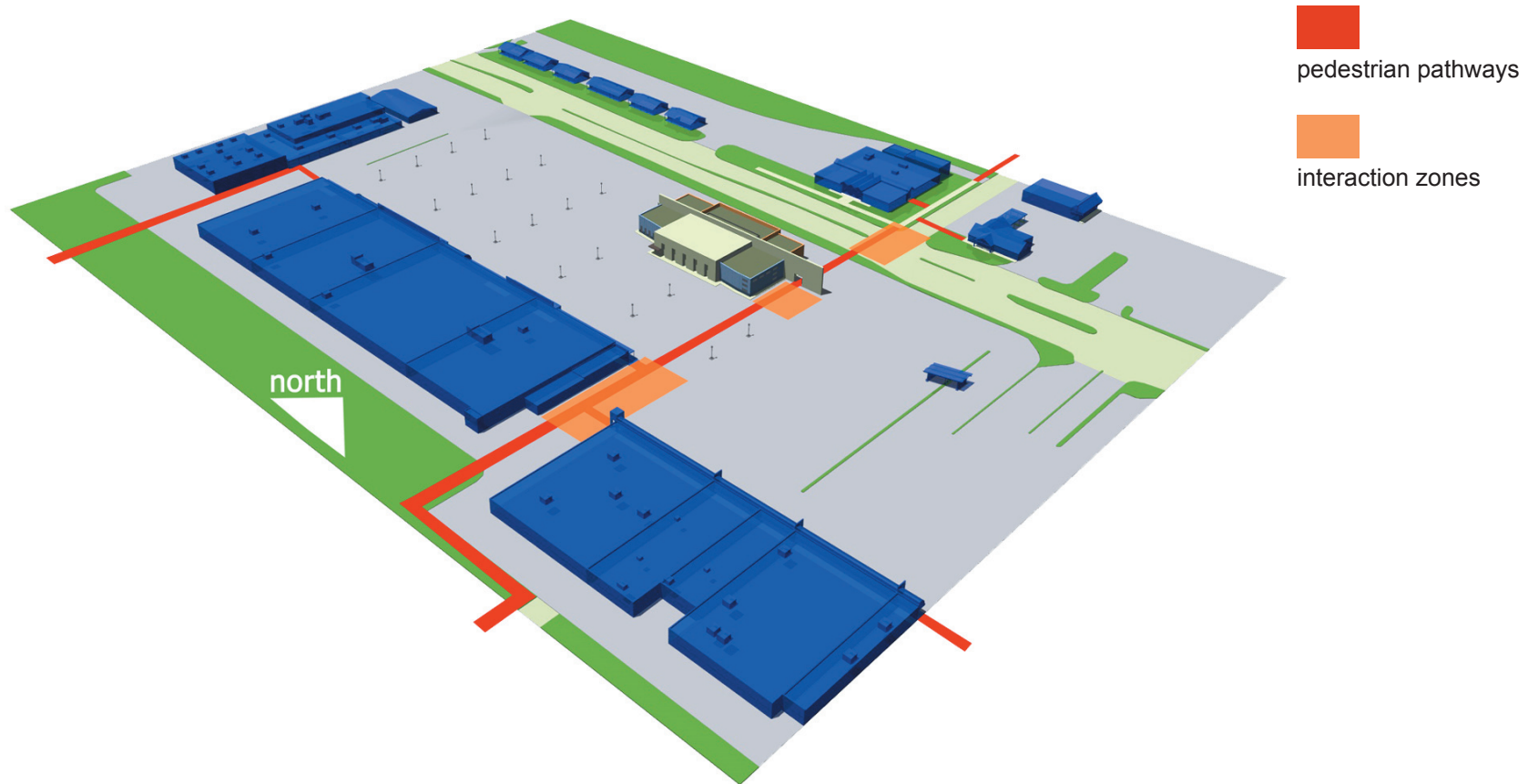
On the interior of the building this dividing wall is visible the entire length of the structure and punched openings allow people and systems to move from one side of the wall to the other. At the very center of the design is the stage, much like the hearth at the center of a home. At this point a large opening is cut in this dividing plane, clearly defining the stage.



west perspective elevation

north perspective elevation





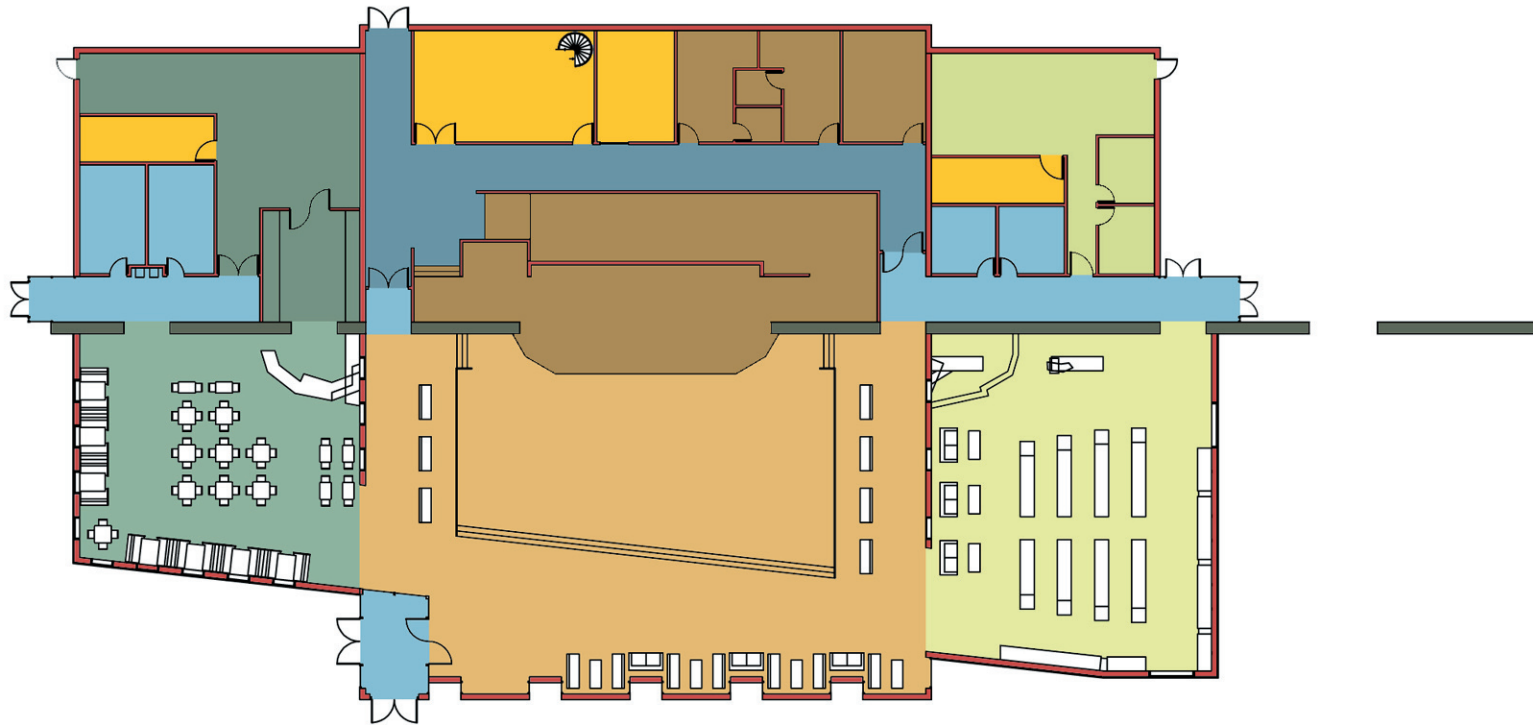
[addressing disconnect 3]

Using a large square void cut out of the central dividing wall a pedestrian pathway is formed within the site as well as a visually and acoustically shielded outdoor seating area. Future development of the site would include a pedestrian corridor connecting the southern side of McGalliard with the northern half. Along this pathway three different zones of interaction would be addressed. One being the intersection of vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the parking lot. The second being a seating and relaxation area immediately adjacent to the building, defined by the central wall. The third zone is the existing intersection of McGalliard and Rosewood which currently has no designated pedestrian crossing.

In addition to these future developments one important change within the site would be implemented immediately. As the site currently exists there is nothing designed on a personal or pedestrian level. In addition to this the parking lot is largely open and barren allowing vehicular traffic to cut across at a variety of angles. To address both of these issues the

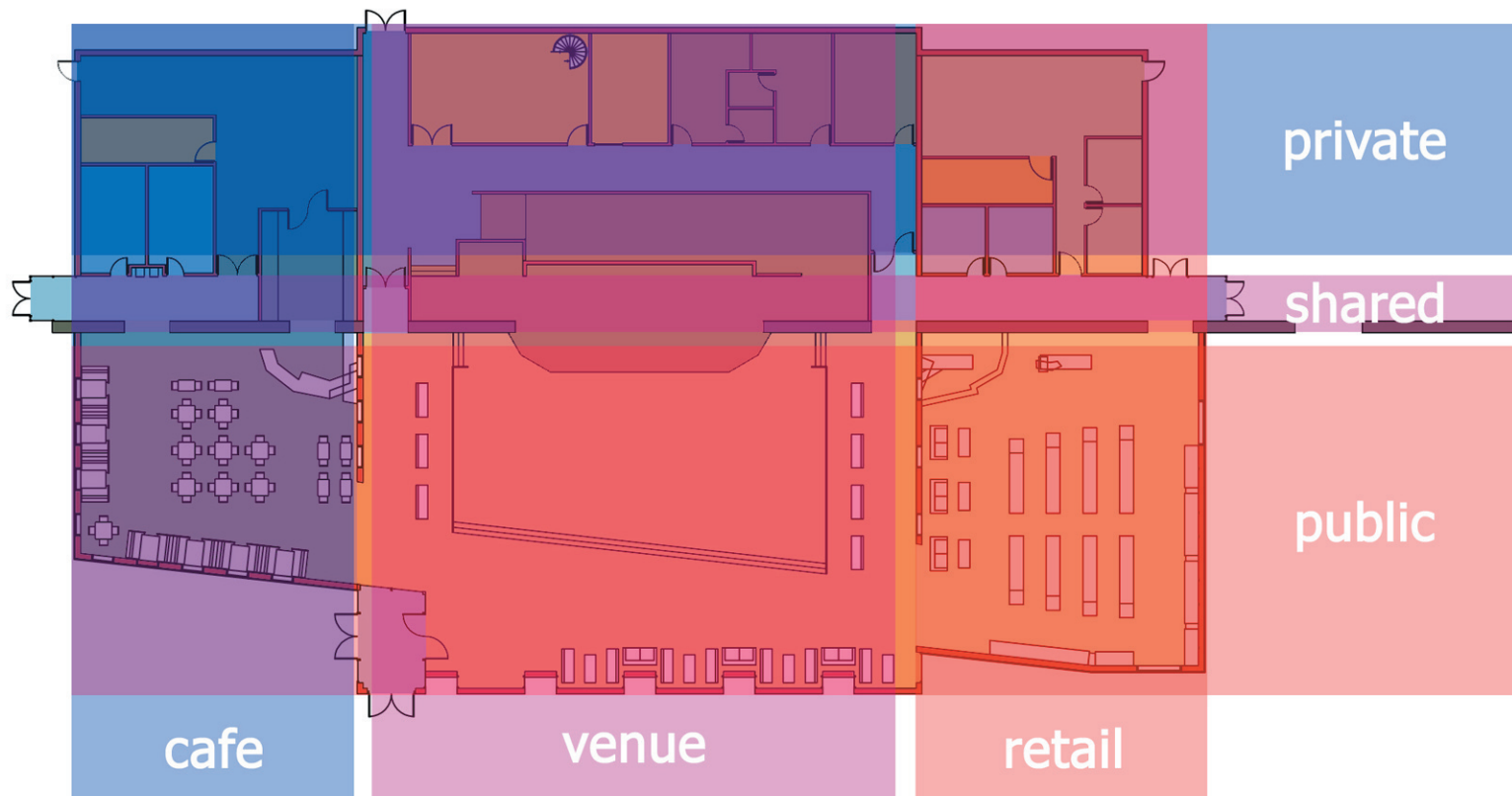
light fixtures in the parking lot have been modified. First they have been lowered to bring the scale of the parking lot to a pedestrian level. Secondly, they have been redesigned to address the fact that they exist in a site dictated by right angles and rectilinear objects. Finally, the number of lights has doubled. This is done out of the necessity to provide ample lighting in the parking lot but also to create a visual ordering system for the space. In addition to the new building on the site these changes will help define clear zones for vehicular traffic, parking, and pedestrian pathways.

- mechanical space
- shared space: circulation, restrooms
- private circulation
- cafe support space
- venue support space
- retail support space



- cafe seating area
- venue seating area
- retail space

building plan



building plan: zones of organization



[interior: cafe]

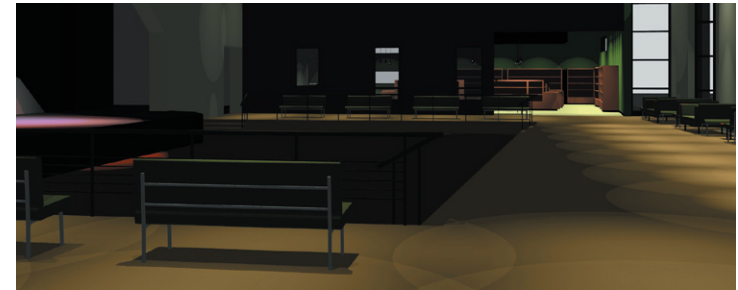
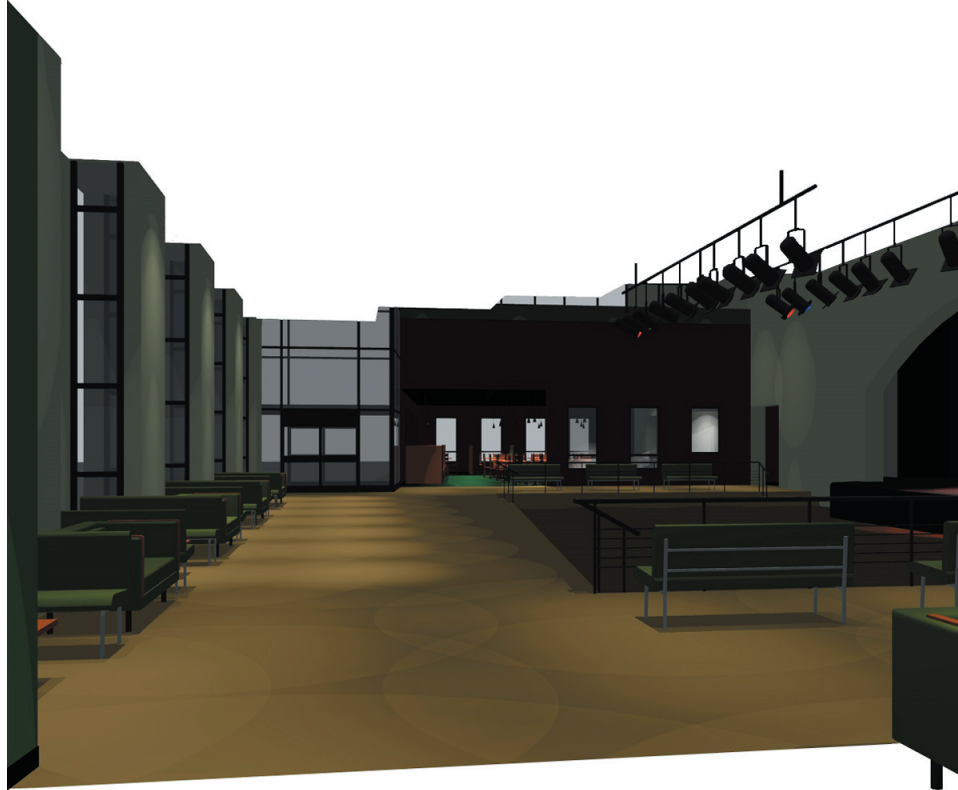
The cafe is designed to serve two distinct functions. First of all it is an autonomous, income producing cafe with ample seating, daylighting, and a variety of seating areas. Secondly it serves as a auxiliary space to the venue. Being partially separated visually from the concert area, along with a lower ceiling height and spot lighting, lends a sense of intimacy to this space that is not as apparent in the large, open venue. This space is also designed to allow people within the cafe to hear what is going on in the venue, but only be able to partially understand it as their views are limited.



[interior: retail]

The retail space is located on the opposite end of the venue from the cafe and as such serves to envelope the venue in consumer oriented spaces. This area is envisioned as a place where music, reading, coffee, and other services and goods geared toward the college age demographic would be featured. Again, as in the cafe, it provides seating areas where customers can read, relax, and begin to experience the activities taking place on stage.

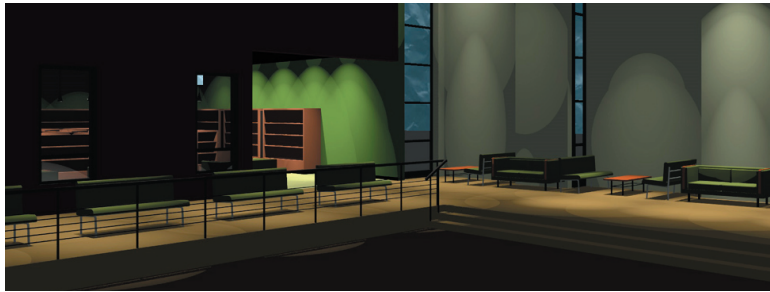




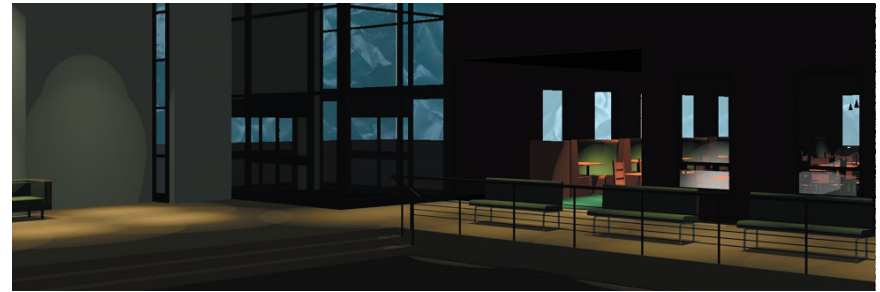
[interior: venue]

Originally being the focus of the thesis project the investigation into a college town concert venue drove the design of this space. The first issue that I addressed was to provide views for everyone who is in the venue. To accomplish this the main seating area is dropped into the floor eighteen inches while the stage is raised eighteen inches. This height difference allows people sitting or standing around the perimeter of the room to be able to view the stage. Another aspect of the room that is driven by views is the proportions of the space. The room is longer across the front of the stage, as opposed to deeper from the stage, to allow most of the audience to be closer to the performance.

The second issue that I addressed was to provide various seating and congregation areas for the audience. Along the southern wall the building shell creates several small seating areas which would be the most private and secluded spaces in the venue. Flanking the main gathering area are two seating areas designed to permit the user to see the main crowd and the stage while still being somewhat separate from the main space. The main, sunken, gathering area is located directly in front of the stage. This space creates a sense of intimacy between the performers and the audience while defining a clear boundary around the main seating area.



view from the stage



view from the stage

[interior: organization]

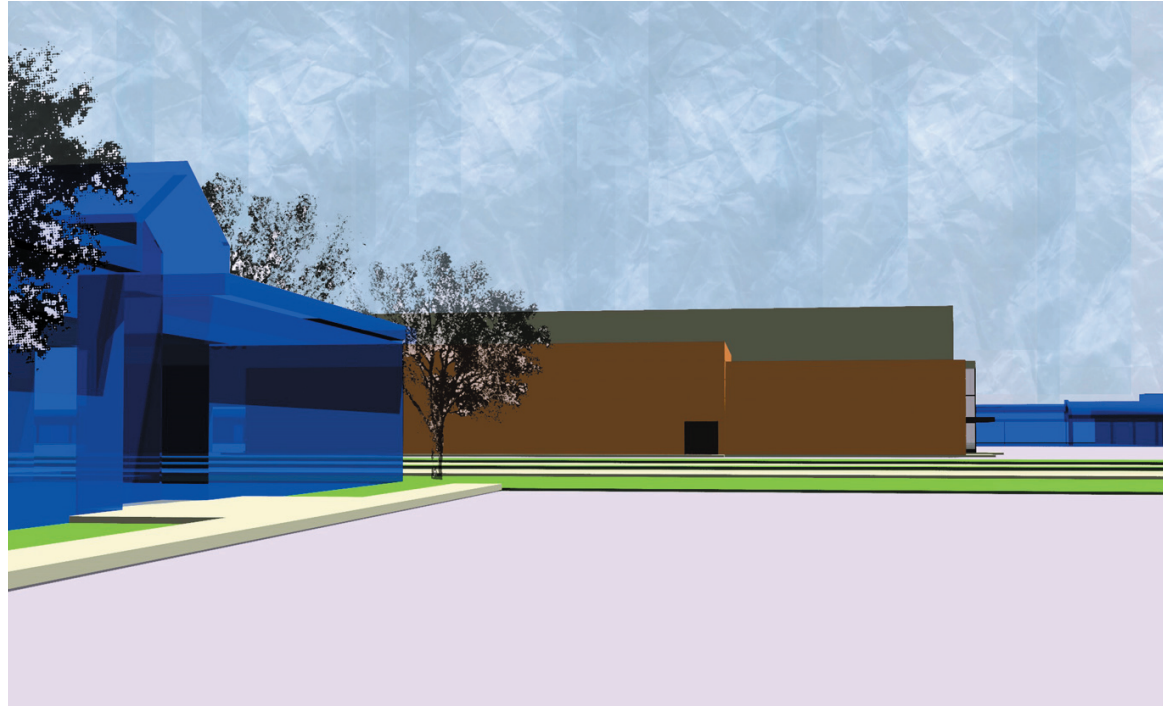
The building has three public entrances, one main entrance on the south face and two auxiliary entrances on the east and west faces, to allow the facility to be used in a variety of ways. During a normal operating day the main entrance would be used by most customers, creating a circulation pattern along the southern wall of the venue, cafe, and retail spaces. If, for some reason the venue was closed, i.e. for a private or more exclusive show, and the outside spaces were to remain open, each of these areas have an independent circulation system. In this way both the retail and cafe spaces can function as autonomous spaces or as areas directly supporting the venue.

The issues driving this style of design are more than to simply allow the building to be used in a variety of ways. Because the site is located in a college town, and the venue is geared toward servicing this demographic, the venue space will be much more highly trafficked during the typical school year. During the summer, or even during weeks of inactivity, the central space could be closed off and shut down so that the owner would not be forced to financially support the cleanliness and climate of this space.



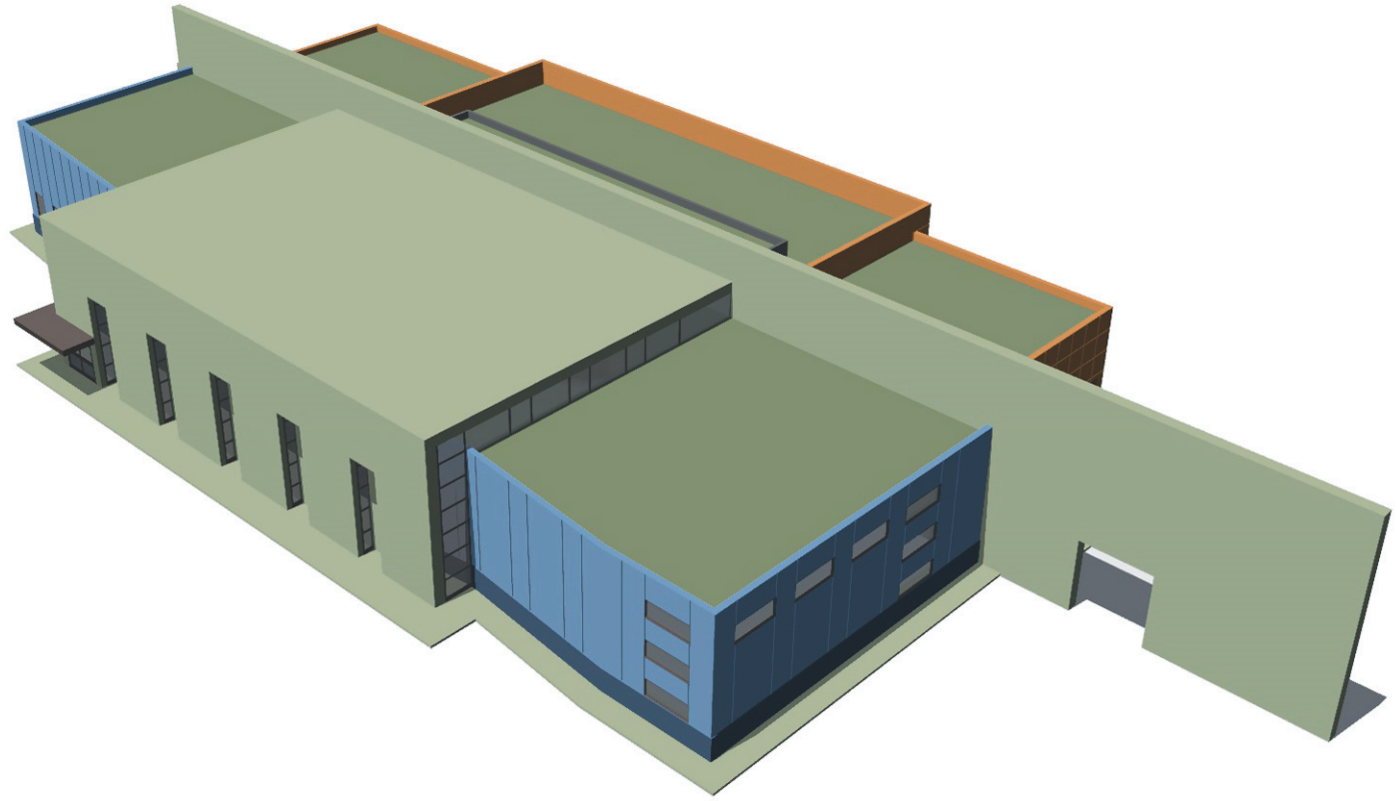
building plan: 3D extrusion

view from kennedy branch library

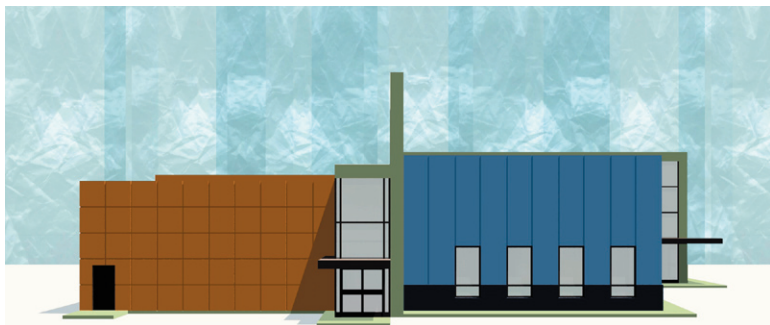


view from the southern neighborhood

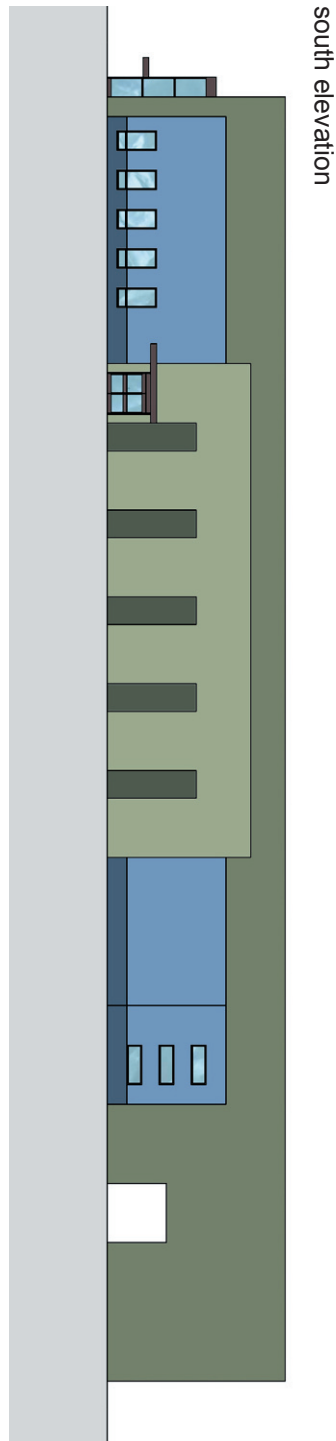




money shot



east perspective elevation



REFLECTION

The mere mention of a fifth year as an undergraduate is enough to make some people reconsider what degree they choose to pursue. For those of us that have stuck it out through the architecture program the fifth year has been one filled with various and sincere emotions.

“Totally frustrated” was a phrase I often uttered in response to questions about how I was feeling about my design, my thesis, and the process that I was laboring through at the beginning of this year. Never before have I experienced an educational process that frustrated me in the way that this year has. I never could have predicted the amount of late nights I would spend staring at my computer, the amount of sleep I would lose to mulling over my design, the amount of Ricker’s pops that I would drink, or how many of my initial ideas would lead to yet another dead end. Throughout the year Brian Hollars was there to tell me to build a model or sketch something out and simply “get it out of [my] head.”

While this year has been frustrating it has been supremely rewarding at the same time. Never before have I crammed this large an amount of knowledge into my brain in one year. I have learned more about the design process that I must go through to produce a building while doing this thesis than in the past four years of school combined. The thesis year is in all actuality more of an exercise in understanding yourself instead of producing a tangible product. Yet, in both of those instances, I feel as if I have done all that I could possibly do and have not had to pull up short in anything.

This year has a bittersweet feel to it. It’s great to be leaving and moving on to the next chapter in our lives. For many of my graduating class their future lies across the United States in various locations, for me that chapter will be written overseas as a missionary with Campus Crusade for Christ. No matter how excited we are to be done with all of this I feel that we all share a certain sense of loss when faced with the decision to leave this place. This school is where we have grown up, forged lasting relationships, met lifelong friends, and have begun to truly understand who we are in this world. Some say that your college years are the best time in your life, but I would prefer to think of them instead as one of the most unique experiences that I’ve had. An experience that will never be forgotten and never duplicated, but is not necessarily the best time in my life. Thesis year has been frustrating at times, but in the end it has been a truly memorable experience. Thank you again to all who were a part of it.

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SOFTWARE USED

- Graphics
Adobe Photoshop 7.0
Adobe InDesign 2.0
Adobe Acrobat 5.0
- Modelling
AutoCAD 2000
- Rendering
Accurender 3.0